This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3 3433 07480014 9

BLUESTONE

MARGUERITE WICKINSON

Copy

BLUESTONE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

BLUESTONE

LYRICS

BY

MARGUERITE WILKINSON

AUTHOR OF "NEW VOICES"

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920

All rights reserved

875730

COPYRIGHT, 1920
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Set up and electrotyped. Published June, 1920.

TO J. G. W.

COMRADE BESIDE ALL SWIFT RIVERS
THESE AND ALL MY SONGS

Thanks are due to the editors of Contemporary Verse, Scribner's Magazine, the North American Review, The Nation, The Touchstone, The Independent, The Smart Set, Poetry, A Magazine of Verse, Ainslee's Magazine, Everybody's Magazine, McCall's Magazine, The Farm Journal, The Boston Evening Transcript, The Forum, and The New York Times for permission to reprint here poems published for the first time in these periodicals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction xiii
Bluestone 1
Songs from Beside Swift Rivers
A Chant out of Doors 9
I Came to be Alone 11
The Air 13
Ghosts 14
Song of Two Wanderers 15
Before Dawn in the Woods 17
White Magic 18
By a Salmon River 19
This Shall be the Bond 20
An Oath in April 23
Sunset 24
Near the Rivers 25
Silver Waters 26
"The Really Truly Twirly Whirly Eel" 27
Barefoot 29
Berries 32
A Thought when Noon is Hot 34
Green Valleys 35

Songs of Poverty
Debt 41
To-day 42

CONTENTS

PAGE

Tired 43
Pawnbroker 44
Passing a Friend 45
Work 46
Poverty 47

PREFERENCES

People 51
Weather 55
Music 56
Food 57
Colors 58
Trees 59

LOVE SONGS

An Incantation 63
A Walk in Springtime 64
A Chant of Youth 65
In Passing 67
Let There Be Light 68
Morning and Evening 69
A Song for my Mate 71
At the Last 72

SONGS OF AN EMPTY HOUSE

Vista 77
Food and Clothing 79
Childless 80
For the Child that never Was 82
The End 83

CONTENTS

PAGE

SONGS OF LAUGHTER AND TEARS

A Long Song of Momus 87
An Elegy 91
Garments 94
In a Certain Restaurant 96
Garden Song 98
A Song for Mother's Day 100
Birth 101
To my Country 102
Songs of Sun and Shadow
I 103
II 104
III 105
Time-Shadows 106

WHIMS FOR POETS

The Winds 111
To Seanchan 112
Duty 113
If They Will not Hear Me 114
Songs I Sang Long Ago 115

CALIFORNIA POEMS

The Mountain Lilac of California 119
A Night on the Beach 121
These for Me 122
The Fog Comes in at Night 123
To the Summer Sun 124

THE PAGEANT 126

INTRODUCTION

The centuries, speeding us through the cycles of human experience, bring us back, from time to time, to an interest in old things that seem new. The making of lyrics with musical melodies that belong to the words because they have grown with them in the mind of the poet is no new thing. But in our times and in our language it has been little discussed. Nevertheless, I believe that such melodies exist for others, even to-day, as they do for me. In the hope of learning more about them and about their importance as a part of poetic craftsmanship I am writing this introduction. If I must offer another excuse for my temerity in setting down melodies of my own here, let me mention my lifelong interest in rhythm.

When I was still a child I enjoyed melody, and a sweet-flowing sequence of syllables in verse, or a bit of imaginative phrasing that I could understand. But rhythm gave a deeper delight. I shall never forget my pleas-

ure in the folksongs that my father and mother sang to their children; nor the dance music that my mother played for us in the evening after dinner, improvising gracefully while she watched us spinning around the big living room on tiptoe. I liked a band, too, partly because the beat of the drum was accompanied by a melody that ran with it, as it seemed to me then, but also ran away from it. But not all rhythms gave me pleasure. I was tormented by the strict regularity of the rhythm of "The Lay of The Last Minstrel" when I heard it for the first time.

I was not a musical child. I was the least musical member of a large and very musical family. I rebelled against piano lessons and suffered when taken to concerts. I am not a musical person to-day, judged by the usual standards. For this reason it may seem strange that when I was still a little girl I began to make lyrics with tunes, to sing them into existence with queer little melodies that grew as the words grew. I would begin to make a poem, and when it was finished I would find a tune with it, come, like one of the Good People, from nobody knows where.

After those days when poetry was a shy happiness, came school days and college days when an intellectual interest in scansion came near to making me love it for its own sake. I made innumerable experiments. I treated the sonnet and other verse forms with crude unkindness. I attempted to translate the beloved hexameters of Homer into English hexameters. When I failed I trembled on the verge of the perilous thought that it was not altogether my own fault. The English language was quite unlike the Greek in quality. At about the time when I made this discovery I began to lose faith in scansion although I was glad that I had studied and practised it. I came to believe that "correct thought in flawless meter," taken as an ideal, would never produce poetry. It was quite as likely to produce Brussels carpet. And I realized that the Oriental rug, with its occasional abrash, is a far truer, stronger, and more beautiful expression of thought and feeling than the impeccable, machine-made carpet can possibly be. But through all my experiments and in spite of changing faiths my method of chanting or singing a lyric

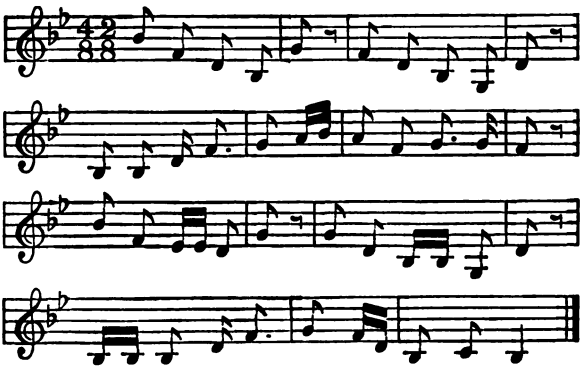
into life persisted. And recently I have begun to give it much thought as a part of craftsmanship.

What happens is simply this: while I am making a lyric, after the mood becomes clear, after the idea and image emerge from consciousness, I sing it, and sometimes slowly, sometimes quite rapidly, the words take their places in lines that carry a tune, also. I am not giving conscious attention to the tune. Nor am I making an intellectual effort to combine words and music and get a certain effect. I am not thinking about the music. I am making a single-hearted and strong endeavor to say or sing what is felt and thought. Sometimes a lyric and the melody that belongs with it grow in my mind for a long time before they become vocal and can be set down on paper. "Bluestone" was in my mind for nearly a year before it was finished with the melody given here. Sometimes it all happens very quickly. But it is always quite impossible to watch the process with detached interest while it is going on. It is only by looking back on it afterward, and by studying the tunes in relation to the

words, that I make the discoveries which interest me and lead me to ask for a share in the knowledge of others who may be working in similar ways.

First of all let me say that, in my opinion and for me, the musical tunes that I make are of one sort with the rhythmical tunes of the words as spoken, and with the meaning that the words are intended to convey. My melodies even seem to have an organic unity with the phraseology and imagery of the lines. That this will not necessarily be true for others who may read or sing my lyrics I am ready to admit. But for me it is true.

If I take for example "A Thought When Noon Is Hot," for me both tune and words are exuberant, sharing the quick joy that comes to campers when, under the sharp noonday sun, after a thirsty morning on the road or on the river, they find a chilly spring where water tastes sweeter than any that can be drawn from a faucet.

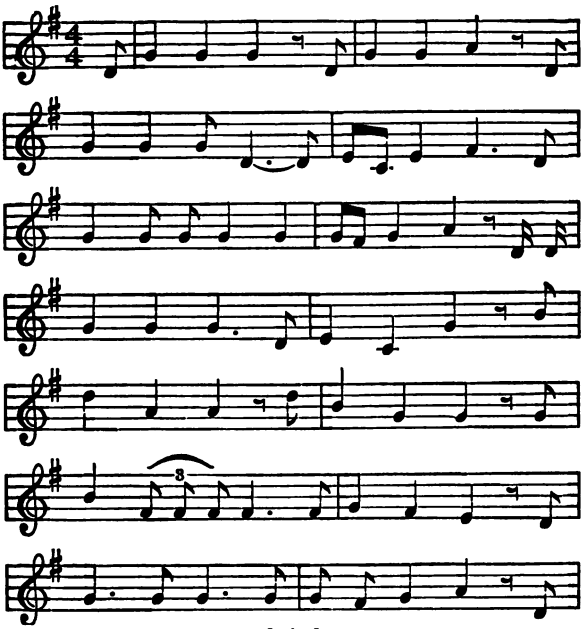


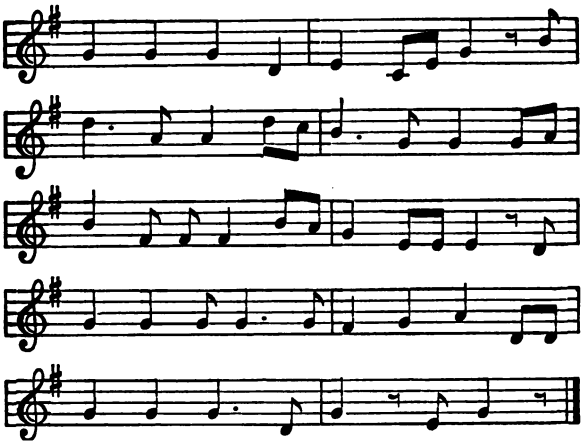
A THOUGHT WHEN NOON IS HOT

Joy will cool my face,
Joy will wash my hands,
Into very joy I shall plunge my arms
  And sing;
Joy will sweeten my mouth,
Joy will gladden my throat,
And freshen my very life, when I reach
  The spring.

Similarly it seems to me that in "The Winds" the mood of the tune varies from the delicate joy of the first stanza to the sorrow of the second, then to the pensive quality of the first two lines of the third

stanza, and the resolution of the last two lines, just as words and meaning vary. If I were to theorize I should say, also, that I think the fact that all of these feelings are symbolized and generalized, not made actual and concrete, is what makes it possible to touch them all lightly with such a tune and to pass quickly from one to another.





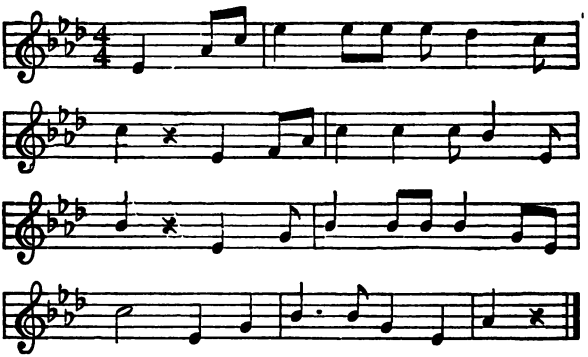
THE WINDS

The wind blew north, the wind blew south,
The wind blew cherries into my mouth,
The wind blew a wild rose into my hair
And a pin of gold to hold it there.

The wind blew east, the wind blew west,
The wind blew a dagger against my breast,
And thorny boughs it blew in my way,
And I was wounded, day after day.

Now all the life of the world, I find,
Is a whim of the winds, be it cruel or kind.
Oh, meet them singing, as they rush forth,
Blowing east and west, or south and north!

I wanted "Bluestone" to be dignified and resonant, but not too sombre. For me the tune echoes and answers that desire.



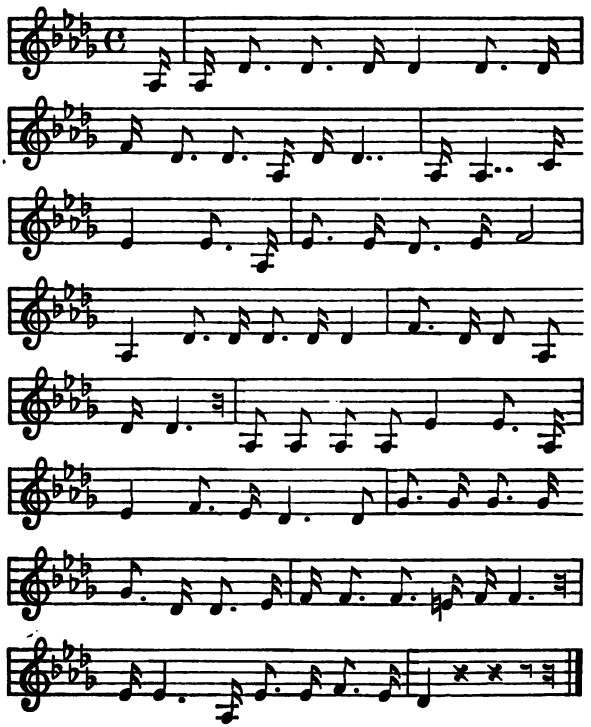
BLUESTONE

Under the bluestone they quarried and cut,
Under a great block facing blue sky,
Not too far from the home of their pride,
Six feet deep my fathers lie.

I have discovered that syllables are never broken in the singing of my lyrics. No syllable is ever combined with several notes, after the manner of composers. There is always a single syllable for a single note, a single note for a single syllable. If the num-

ber of syllables in corresponding lines of the several stanzas of a lyric is not always the same, the number of notes in the tune varies. The value of the note seems to depend on the quality of the syllable, on its relation to the rest of the line, and on accent.

My melodies observe some law of quantity, or enforce it; I am not sure which. A plump, well-rounded syllable is likely to go with an ample, long-sounding note. Quick, slight syllables hurry and scurry along with notes of smalltime-value. The musical accent and the stress of speech fall together. Something of what I mean by this is suggested by the first lines of "The Pageant" and the tune that goes with them. The two long-sounding syllables, "long" and "road," in the first line, are mated with musical notes relatively long. The word "highway," on the other hand, which ends the balancing phrase in the same line, is more quickly sung.

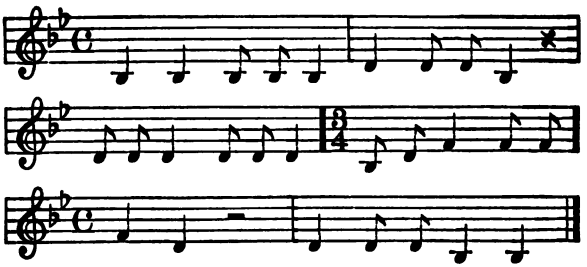


THE PAGEANT

Forever is a long road; Forever is a highway
Whereon go marching through arching nights
and days

Proud Dreams with golden crowns fair upon
    their foreheads,
Shining Dreams with haloes and bright
    Dreams with bays,
And all along the flowered edge the little
    Dreams go dancing,
Singing gay canticles of praise.

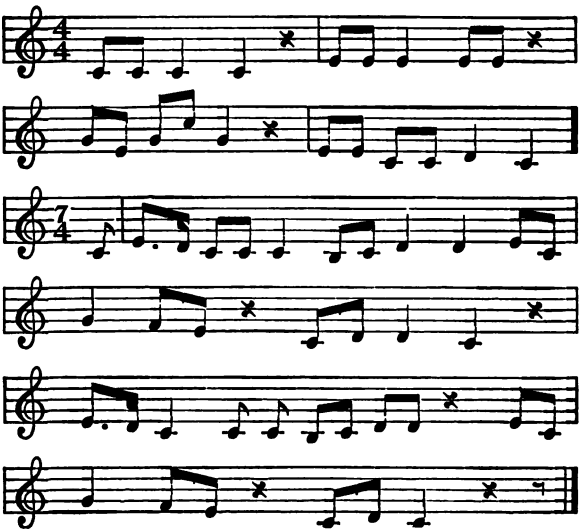
Sometimes, however, a sound that could be sung quickly is held and lengthened slightly because it is pleasant to dwell on it. This is true in "An Incantation." The "O" with which it begins could have been hurried, but not without loss in sonority. In this chant, and in all the others, the rests have nearly as much enotional value as the notes and words, I think. They provide time for a realization of the pictorial quality of the lines. As I visualized "An Incantation" it was chanted on a windy hillside in April with the sun coming and going through cloud-rack and rain. But it is attuned to the severe moods rather than to the daffodil whimsies of April.



AN INCANTATION

O strong sun of heaven, harm not my love!
Sear him not with your flame, blind him not
with your beauty,
Shine for his pleasure.

For the sake of comparison I am setting down another chant, called "A Chant Out Of Doors." It was remembered rather than imagined, a "recollection in tranquillity." It seems to me to be somewhat more complex than "An Incantation" because it carries two interwoven moods, the mood of worship, alternating with the mood of wonder that leads to worship.

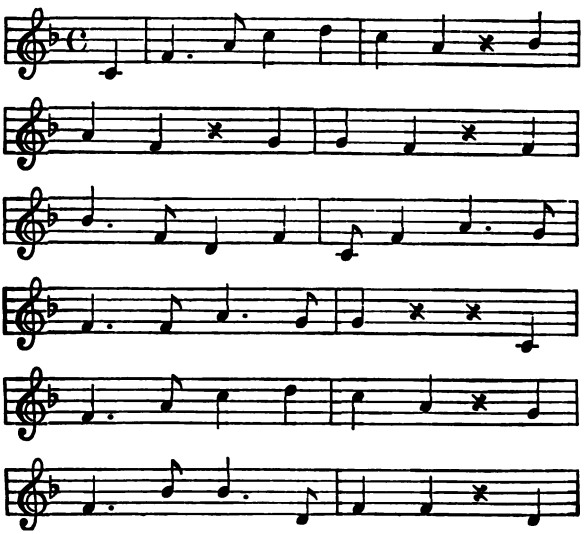


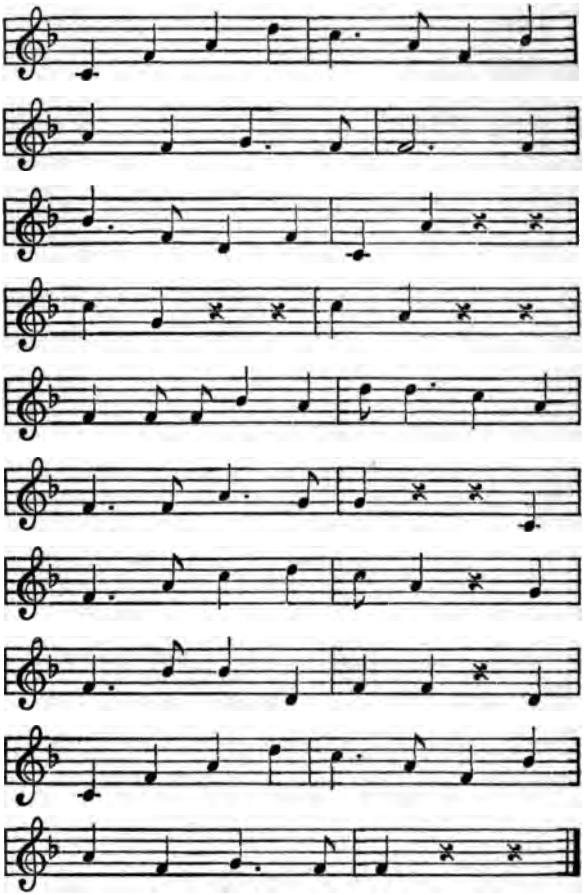
A CHANT OUT OF DOORS

God of grave nights,
God of brave mornings,
God of silent noon,
Hear my salutation!

For where the rapids rage white and scornful
I have passed safely, filled with wonder;
Where the sweet pools dream under willows
I have been swimming, filled with life.

Lyrics written in two stanzas usually have a melody that varies from line to line and from beginning to end. They seldom repeat the melody of the first stanza in the second as hymns do. The melody changes as the poem changes. This is true in particular, of "To-day" in "Songs of Poverty," of "Weather" in "Preferences" and of the third song in the "Sun and Shadow" series, which I am offering here.



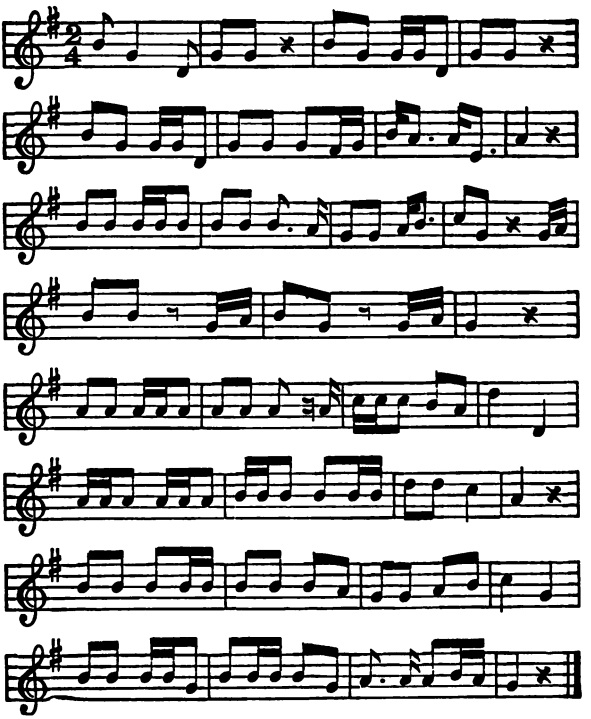


II

My life is like a shadow, a shadow, a shadow,
With soft grey feet that patter down
A path of waning light;
And where the shadow passes is only rustling laughter
That rushes to the mighty dark
Of the low-lying night.

And all my days go dreaming, dreaming, dreaming
Of the declining summer time
And the descending sun,
Beseeching him to waken—O fallen sleeper, waken!
But he goes silently, who knows
The laughing day is done.

The love song called "Morning and Evening" varies in a somewhat similar fashion. The first stanza and the last have the same melody, but in the first it is sung brightly, and in the last, quietly. The second stanza varies.



MORNING AND EVENING

Sunlight and glory!

Who is singing of glory?

I am singing with heart as gay as the honeysuckle vine,
I am singing for one whose words are good as ruddy apples—
In the morning, in the evening, he is mine!

I am singing for one whose voice has music of moving waters;
Delicate ripple and terrible wave and thrilling current and tide
All have tones that he uses well in talk and song and laughter.
I am singing for love of a voice that was the joy of his bride.

Poems in free verse seem to be quite as likely to have tunes made with them as poems in rhymed stanzas. But lyrics whose lines approximate the standard iambic pentameter, either rhymed or blank, seldom grow with tunes of their own. "Berries," "People," "Music," "Birth" and others of their kind have no tunes. I should like to know what this means. Does the familiarity of the iambic pentameter line, or its naturalness in our language, make the singing of it super-

fluous? Is the use of a melody, then, a means of learning how to combine many kinds of metrical feet in many ways to express a special emotion, without being mechanical about it? Or is it simply the old method of the folksong, with this difference, that I probably give much more attention to phraseology, imagery and symbolism and less attention to the music than the folk gave who made our folksongs?

In support of this latter idea is the fact that many of my favorite themes might be called themes of the folk. I write most happily of things that even simple people know well, of homes and camps, of physical and mental hardship and prowess, of adventures in the open, of birth and growth and struggle and of our vision of Forever. "Bluestone" has been called a "class-conscious" poem. It is never that for me. It is simply folk-conscious. And I must admit that when I use these themes of the folk I most frequently sing my lyrics.

In conclusion let me say that I know very well that I am not a musician, a composer. I know very little about music. And I am

most grateful to my mother and to Miss Anita Darling for their assistance in taking down in musical notation the melodies given here.

BLUESTONE

BLUESTONE

Under the bluestone they quarried and cut,
Under a great block facing blue sky,
Not too far from the home of their pride,
Six feet deep my fathers lie.
Their great arms are folded on each broad breast,
Their strong voices quiet, for their lips are dust;
And none, forever, shall break their rest—
But theirs are the words and the deeds that I trust.
They rise from the dead, though their bodies are shut
Under the bluestone they quarried and cut.

They were a good race; theirs was the power
Of good height and girth, firm-knit and clean;
Great skulls they had, and broad, square brows,

Eyes like the bluestone with arched nose
between;
Their minds were rugged as their hands were
strong;
They loved good food and they loved good
song;
They built big homes and they planted much
grain,
Laughing deep laughter in sun and rain;
Many sons and daughters they got in their
pride;
Heartily they lived and hardly they died—
They died, but they live, for they speak to me
Suddenly, sharply, mysteriously.

When I was a child, they set me my
task—
"Bid your mind get all that your mind can
ask!"
When I was a girl, the word of my sires
Was, "Bid your heart give all that your
heart desires!
For a woman, one lover," they said, "one
mate!
Choose you one of our kind, and let your
love be great;

Then build walls about your life, like the bluestone strong,
For the daughters of our race love deeply and long!"

When I was a woman, the wife of a man,
Like hammers in quarries their voices rang clear,
"We are the source where your being began—
You are a mother of to-morrow, my dear.
You shall thrust our strength and our beauty and pride
Out into life again, ere you have died;
You shall be our hands to reach endless years away . . .
You shall be our voice speaking out of to-day."
These things they said, though their bodies were shut
Under the bluestone they quarried and cut.

Sometimes when morning finds me slow to rise,
Wistful in the sun, dull before the skies,

I feel on my shoulder a pressure like Fate,
The touch of a race that stood tall and straight,
That stood straight till age had broken body and will
That nothing else could break. . . I am one of them still. . .
"The bluestone is broken, but never bent," they said.
These are still the words of my ever-living dead.

Sometimes at noon, when I would do no more,
When I am weary, when all my joy is spent,
When I am weak before life, ready to implore,
Though I should command—then, with wise intent,
"Time, not trouble, crumbles bluestone," they say,
"Be like the bluestone for another day."

Sometimes in the evening, when my work is done,
When my man comes home to me with the setting sun,

I think that my fathers are met with us too,
That they rest in our chairs, that they feast as we do.
For "The bluestone is blessed," they said, "when Fate
Lets it pave a quiet walk to the dear home gate."

But oftenest, at night, when I can not sleep,
When thoughts that rest by day wake their watch to keep,
When my hands are strangely still, when winds drone endlessly,
My ever-living dead come back to speak to me.
I do not see them white-clad in garments of the tomb.
I am not afraid when they fill my quiet room.
They murmur in my pulse; they throng my wondering brain;
They give me their wisdom, their dreams, though they remain
With their great arms folded, their fine eyes shut,
Under the bluestone they quarried and cut,
Though under a great block facing blue sky,
Six feet deep my fathers lie.

SONGS FROM BESIDE SWIFT RIVERS

A CHANT OUT OF DOORS

God of grave nights,
God of brave mornings,
God of silent noon,
Hear my salutation!

For where the rapids rage white and scornful,
I have passed safely, filled with wonder;
Where the sweet pools dream under willows,
I have been swimming, filled with life.

God of round hills,
God of green valleys,
God of clear springs,
Hear my salutation!

For where the moose feeds, I have eaten berries,
Where the moose drinks, I have drunk deep.

When the storms crashed through broken
heavens—
And under clear skies—I have known joy.

God of great trees,
God of wild grasses,
God of little flowers,
Hear my salutation!

For where the deer crops and the beaver
plunges,
Near the river I have pitched my tent;
Where the pines cast aromatic needles
On a still floor, I have known peace.

God of grave nights,
God of brave mornings,
God of silent noon,
Hear my salutation!

I CAME TO BE ALONE

I went out from the world of futile talking
and trying,
Out from the world of the quarrels of men to
the nude and silent sky;
And into the woods I came, to the easily
flowing river,
Here of my own nude soul to ask, "What
manner of man am I?"

But I have strangely forgotten all that I
dreamed and wanted,
All that I thought and hoped and dared
only a month ago;
Even the friends of my heart I have lost in
the slipping shadows,
And the slim, young self I see in the stream
is the only self I know.

I shall remember again, perhaps, when the
blessed summer passes,
But now, oh, nothing but storm or peace
under a bending sky,

Racket of winds at night that slap and tug
at the flapping canvas,
And the rock of a good canoe by day on the
rapids racing by.

I shall remember again, perhaps, but now I
have clean forgotten,
For I have been glad of hunger and thirst,
and the fear of death I have known;
Jagged rocks in the rip I have seen and the
quiet waters beyond them,
And the clean, green banks of perfect rest,
since I came to be alone!

THE AIR

The air shone with light and rang with
music
And carried memories of flowers to me,
Where I lay, resting a weary head and
shoulders
Hard against the sod, under a tree.

The air moved gently, joyfully, over, under,
With delicate singing soothing my unrest,
While I lay there, too weary even to mur-
mur,
Too spent to answer life, even with a jest.

The air was lovely. There I slept and
wakened,
And still there was the miracle of the air;
Rested, I flung my arms apart in worship
To think of this glory moving everywhere.

GHOSTS

You say you saw a ghost, in the house, at night,
Standing stiff and chilly in evanescent silver,
In your room, near the bed where your grandfather died.

But I saw ghosts, hundreds of them, dancing,
Out of doors, by day, in a dazzle of sunlight,
Climbing through the air of a clearing near the river,
Flying dizzily there in a brief puff of the breeze,
Yes, hundreds of ghosts, where a little while ago
Died hundreds of the purple blooms of the thistle.

SONG OF TWO WANDERERS

Dear, when I went with you
  To where the town ends,
Simple things that Christ loved,
  They were our friends.

Tree-shade and grass-blade
  And meadows in flower,
Sun-sparkle, dew-glisten,
  Star-glow and shower,
Cool-flowing song at night
  Where the river bends
And the shingle croons a tune—
  These were our friends!

Under us the brown earth,
  Ancient and strong,
The best bed for wanderers
  All the night long!
Over us the blue sky,
  Ancient and dear,
The best roof to shelter all
  Glad wanderers here!

And racing between them there
  Falls and ascends
The chantey of the clean winds—
  These were our friends!

By day on the broad road
  Or on the narrow trail,
Angel wings shadowed us,
  Glimmering pale
Through the red heat of noon;
  In the twilight of dawn
Fairies broke fast with us,
  Prophets led us on!
Heroes were kind to us
  Day after happy day;
Many white Madonnas
  We met on our way—
Farmer and longshoreman,
  Fisherman and wife,
Children and laborers
  Brave enough for life—
Simple folk that Christ loved,
  They were our friends—

Dear, we must go again
  To where the town ends!

BEFORE DAWN IN THE WOODS

Upon our eyelids, dear, the dew will lie,
  And on the roughened meshes of our hair,
While little feet make bold to scurry by
  And half-notes shrilly cut the quickened air.

Our clean, hard bodies on the clean, hard ground,
  Will vaguely feel that they are full of power,
And they will stir and wake and look around,
  Loving the early, chill, half-lighted hour,

Loving the voices in the shadowed trees,
  Loving the feet that move the blossoming grass,—
Oh, always we have known such things as these,
  And knowing, can we love and let them pass?

WHITE MAGIC

Who bids us be wary
  Of briar and snake
Is led by a fairy;

Who finds dry wood
  For the fires we make—
His magic is good;

Who gathers wild berries
  High on far hills,
Or gets sand-cherries,

Who catches the trout
  Where the deep hole fills,
Is a mage no doubt.

Who knows the cool hollow
  Where springs drip cold,
Is a wizard to follow.

Let the magic begin
  With the dawn's red-gold—
But the cook is the Jinn!

BY A SALMON RIVER

From the bank you can see nothing but
swift water
Mottled with shadows and circling golden
lights.

But climb into a tree and then look down—
You will see them etched in grey against the
bottom,
Grand, tapering, silver salmon in delicate
poise,
Headed up-stream to taste the sweetest
springs.

If you would see deep you must climb up high
And look clear through.

THIS SHALL BE THE BOND

This shall be the bond between us, mate of my heart—
Stir of willow branches where the saplings start
Out of sedgy meadows by the downhill stream
Where the air lies soft in dream.

This shall be the bond between us—winding in the sun,
In and out from yesterday, till all our days are done—
The free, onward flowing of the full-hearted river
Past reeds that rustle and quiver.

Ache of throbbing heavens torn by bursting storm,
Tang of bitter wood-smoke where our food waits warm,
And the dear, broken music of the hard-driven rain,
And the cold, and thirst, and pain—

THIS SHALL BE THE BOND

These shall be a bond between us unto the end,
The unknown venture where the singing rapids bend
To the clean, white danger of the foaming rip
Where our boat must dance and dip.

Ringing of the pebbles where the riffles are shallow,
Pleasant quip of quail in the fields long fallow,
And the dawn's quaint chorus out of old delight,
And the sweet-scented peace of night;

Blowing of the merry buds, rosy, blue and yellow,
Flushing of the wild fruits until they are mellow,
Strawberries, raspberries, and saucy winter-green,
All rich things heard and seen:

All will be a bond between us, till we are too old
For the high-hearted going, till the tales we have told

Of the long rivers winding from the hills to
the sea
Are but mirth and a memory.

For the love of all wild things is warm upon
our lips,
And the old earth is answered in our meeting finger-tips:
We are growing full-hearted as the rivers
grow great—
This shall be the bond, my mate!

AN OATH IN APRIL

I swear by cool white blood-root blossom,
By the new grass, by the new day,
By the fine, crisp lights on ice-fed waters
Where trout and water-beetles play,
I swear by the scent of the wet brown earth
And by dreams of new moss silently creeping,
By the hurrying life that would find birth
In the woods, roused from their heavy sleeping,
That I will be the wild Earth's friend
Till the time has come to rest again,
In her rich renewal, world without end,
Yes, world without end. Amen!

SUNSET

The little, yellow, fluttering rays of light
  Are running home to rest,
Where the sun broods like a great mother bird,
  Red in the low, red West.

Broad bands of rose and gold flare up and out
  Across a cloud-filled sky,
And stretch with feathery edge against the grey,
  Like great wings lifted high.

And then are folded close the little lights,
  Then fall the wide, bright wings
On a grey nest of clouds, where shadows hide
  Their mystic flutterings.

NEAR THE RIVERS

Inland a little way are men and women,
Tall firs upon the hillside,
Rich wheat in golden fields;
But beside the banks of little rivers
Are children, and lilies.

SILVER WATERS

Run, run, silver waters,
  Underneath the sycamores;
Ah, what rush of fluent music
  Through the ample shadow pours!

Leap, dance, silver waters,
  Over boulders brown and cool;
Slip around the pebbly corner
  Quickly to the swimming pool!

Run, run, silver waters,
  Till the open pool is won,
Where our little laughing brothers
  Plunge and paddle in the sun!

"THE REALLY TRULY TWIRLY WHIRLY EEL"

This being no serious poem for scholars, but a jingle for all small boys.

The trout won't bite?
Well, never mind,
The eels will—
They always do!
The river is full
Quite full of eels
That twist and twirl
About the piers.
Just build a fire
Here on the shore—
They like the light—
Then bait your line
With cut-up-sucker,
Or any old fish,
And wait and see . . .

Uncle Eel will see the light—
Hey, wriggly, twisty, oh!
He will smell the bait and bite—
The twirly, whirly sport!

He will wriggle and twist like sin,
Spatter and splash when you pull him in,
Knot your line and writhe in his skin,
  Wriggly, twisty, oh!

Now you're sorry for Uncle Eel?
  Hey, wriggly, twisty, oh!
Well, I know just how you feel
  For the twirly, whirly sport,
For he wriggles his best, when all is said,
He never stops when he loses his head,
He keeps it up when you know he is dead,
  Wriggly, twisty, oh!

BAREFOOT

For all little girls.

Oh, the fine dust is soft as down for my feet,
And they feel how the warmth of the summer is sweet
On the broad yellow road, as they travel down
The big, high hill to the little, low town.

But still they are dreaming of ways they know
Through sluggish marshes where rushes grow;
Of ways that are chilly and moist with slime,
Where hard is the crossing or heavy the climb.

And my feet remember the ways kept cool
By the living spring and the waiting pool,
Where weary they rested—a night—a day—
While the frisky pollywogs wriggled at play.

And my feet remember the stern, hard rock
Of the hilly upland, the sudden shock
Of its cold edge at night, and the burning pain
Of its blistering heat when the day came again.

Oh, more they remember—a thousand things—
Fine feathers fallen from little gay wings,
And the moss by the dew kept soft and clean,
And the brush of the ferns, and the dark earth between;

Prick of the thistle and thrust of the thorn
Of the wild briar bushes, where quick they were torn,
And the shifting of pine needles under their toes,
And the bruises of pebbles where the wild brook flows.

For they have been wounded with porcupine quills,
And they have been washed where the spring freshet spills

Her flood of rough laughter, and they have
been gay
Like the feet of the fawn, or the squirrel,
all day.

Oh, the fine dust is soft on the broad road
down
From the big, high hill to the little, low
town—
But my feet still remember, and long to go
Up again, back, to the things they know.

BERRIES

Which are the sweetest, raciest wild berries
That grow in all the world? Where can you find them?
Do you think the mellow crimson strawberries
Dented with gold like shining drops of fire.
Unquenched in the dewy meadows of New Brunswick
Are best of all?
Or do you like raspberries
Like carmine embers where thorny bushes grow
On the cleared hill above the beaver dam,
Or blueberries in a high New England fallow,
Smoky upon the scrub and warm to touch?

Or would you have the evergreen blackberries
Like little clustered spheres of jet, on vines

Whose roots sink deep into moist Oregon
soil
To gather sugary wine?
If you could choose,
Which would you go the longest way to
gather?
Sometimes I think—but I can never decide!

A THOUGHT WHEN NOON IS HOT

Joy will cool my face,
Joy will wash my hands,
Into very joy I shall plunge my arms
  And sing;
Joy will sweeten my mouth,
Joy will gladden my throat,
And freshen my very life, when I reach
  The spring.

GREEN VALLEYS

To you, green valleys,
I am going home—
You have given me a home
Whose walls are bright air,
Whose floor is the grass,
Whose roof is white light
Where the blue eaves of heaven hang bare.

Dear green valleys,
I shall go, for you have called
With your three ancient voices
That speak ten thousand strong;
The voice of mating birds,
The voice of moving waters,
And the wind's inconstant song.
You can not know my need
Of the home you have given,
At whose doors my spirit
Never knocks in vain—
Oh, give me even the thorns
And the thistles of your paths
For my wise bare feet,

And your cold and heat and pain—
Oh, share your simple strength
Of frost and fire and foam—
Dear green valleys,
When I go home.

Give me your streams
That I may breast the rapids,
Fighting bravely up
With the old, slow strain;
Give me your hills,
The wardens of your beauty,
And your strong-guarding rocks
That I may climb again;
Give me your storms—
I would be buffeted and shaken
That once more I may know
The peace that conquers fear,
And the long, grateful rest,
And the silent hosannah
That the hard-willed struggle brings near.

But fill the wide rooms
Of my home with fragrance—
Down the unending corridors
Blow the scent of noon;

Up the star-reaching stairs
Whirl the scent of midnight;
Dear green valleys,
I shall go soon.
And always I shall go,
Always when you call me
To the hearth unbounded
And the rooms with fragrance filled,
Till a quiet time comes
When my will has forsaken
All the dear deeds that I have willed.

Then, when I shall need
Airy ways no longer,
When my feet can feel
No thistle in the grass,
Still let your ancient voices,
No weaker and no stronger,
Chant above my rest,
Singing as they pass,
For I shall be one, then,
With frost and fire and foam.

Dear green valleys,
I shall be at home.

SONGS OF POVERTY

DEBT

Everywhere I go, in country or in town,
Great clouds above me are weighing me down;
The rain drops too heavily; too hard shines the sun;
All the winds are sinister; the days one by one,
Glide into long nights when I cannot rest;
There is no more pleasure in the food on my plate;
Stronger elbows jostle mine; meaner lips jest;
And for all I want of life I can only wait.
Deeper drives the bitterness, deeper every day—
I, who would be giving, can not even pay.

TO-DAY

I will walk as far as my strength will take
me,
Though I had nothing for breakfast to-day;
I will go out where the eyes of strangers
Ask me questions when they look my way;

But I will not bend my neck to the pity of
fools,
I will not turn my face when Arrogance
calls,
Though I die of heat, though I die of hunger,
Falling by the road as an old horse falls.

TIRED

Going on is a long, long walk;
Hills—stones—heat—dust—
My bundles pull hard upon my arm;
How can I go on? But I must.

My feet are heavy on the road;
Up—down—up—down—
They move like a worn-out machine
About to stop. But I must get to town.

My shoulders are sagging; I am weak,
Faint—sore—dull—slow—
It's a long, long walk to just around the
bend
When you are too tired to go.

PAWNBROKER

Pawnbroker, pawnbroker, what will you lend me
  On my grandmother's locket with the old gold chain?
(I wore it one night when my dear leaned to kiss me—
  We were walking home in the cool grey rain.)

Pawnbroker, what will you lend me on my coat?
  It's fine cloth. (The weather is warmer to-day.
It was cold when he gave me that coat on my birthday,
  Reckless because they had raised his pay.)

Sign of the three golden balls, I am going;
  For now I have nothing. As others have died,
Even so I can. I'll not be returning;
  For pawnbroker, what would you lend on my pride?

PASSING A FRIEND

I thought I saw a friend to-day—
  The look of him was dear—
But I shrank and turned my face away,
  Hurt by a sudden fear
That he might turn and chance to see,
  As I went down the street,
The sloven boots with crooked heels
  That shame my sorry feet.

WORK

Against my need of shelter and food
I set my struggling flesh and blood
And mind and heart, to make life give
What I must have if I would live.

I do not know from day to day
Which side will win the next grim play,
What marginal bit of praise or blame
Will let me have—or lose—the game.

You say the stakes are small, that I
Am but one mortal, if I die,
And that the odds are heavy. Still
Against my need I set my will.

POVERTY

This, then, is what the great have known—
  The reaching for a crust,
The taking of the cast-off cloak,
  The breathing of the dust;
This is the thing that saints have praised
  And prophets have endured,
And this is what the Lord Christ blessed,
  Since it could not be cured.

Ah, well, I am not saint enough
  To bless an ugly need.
Nor can I share the glowing peace
  Of those of holy breed.
But now that I have known this thing,
  I may have grace to find
That common good the great have found,—
  The courage of mankind.

PREFERENCES

PEOPLE

To E. E. K. and E. K. S.

Sometimes, when I am happy and at rest,
I think, of all things, I like people best.
Even the shallow, round-eyed gossips give
A little zest to life. So let them live!
Just to be near my kind and hear them talk-
ing
Seems very good to me. Oh, dearer far
The racket on the streets where men are
walking
Than all the prairie's quiet spaces are.

But when I think more keenly, I confess,
There are a few that I like somewhat less
Than others; those who smugly speak to me
With minds elusive as crabs upon the rocks;
Who reach limp fingers out too languidly
When they shake hands; whose kindness only
mocks.
I hope that they may prosper in some good
way
And find them friends according to their
needs,

Die, without doing much harm, some quiet
day,
And reach the heavens of their several
creeds.

But I like people who can make things grow,
Whose hands are wise to move the quick-
ened earth
In Spring, so that the new vine-tendrils know
An easier grace and a more confident mirth.
I like the makers of a thousand things,
Of music, magic of words, or mighty wings
That cut the winds as they go droning
through
The wondering deeps of the defiant blue.
And always I can find out much of good
In people who know how to handle food;
I think there is some merit of heart or head
In any person who can make good bread,
And make it lovingly, and put away
The golden-crusted loaves, as if to say,
"It is no small matter to remake mankind
Daily with flour, the body and the mind."
I like firm health that never comes by
chance,
And a quick handshake, and a greeting meant,

A sudden glint of hardness in the glance,
And slow thought spoken out of strong content.
I like an athlete as I like a tree,
And both are very beautiful to me.
I like men with the manners of great kings
In all the little worlds of common things—
Shrewd, humorous men, still quick to kindliness,
With dreams they laugh at rather than express;
And busy women, ample and motherly,
Guarding the little children they have borne,
Making their homes houses of refuge, free
To all who are unmothered and forlorn.
Mellow old veterans to whom the years
Have given wisdom, and young pioneers
Who lay rough hands upon a living truth
And hold it with the passion of their youth,
And those who can be gay through middle-age,
And every questioner, and every sage—
All these have my respect; whole-heartedly
I would give thanks for all their gifts to me.
Since I have been poor and sick my words would bless

The sick and poor with every gentleness,
And since I have known sadness very well,
I care for the sorrowful more than I can tell.
And I revere the flower-like, serene
Spirits that bloom on hills where air is pure,
Lonely and rare, with a long climb between
Their world and the lower world that I
endure.

But dearest are the homes where children
play,
Where men smoke quietly to end the day,
Where women sew, and sing, and dream,
and brood,
Declaring, without speech, that life is good,
Where with some homely ritual of delight
The year's high festivals are made more
bright.
Oh, when in such a simple home I rest,
I think that I like simple people best.

WEATHER

Give me a land where the fog comes manifold and grey
From over the black wash of the waves and the sheer white spray;
For in a land where the fog lies my mother bore her child—
Out of the blown wet veil of the fog first I wept and smiled.

Give me a land where the fog comes, for when I burn with pain,
As to a mother I would go home into the fog again;
I would leave the garish fire of the sun and go where skies are blind,
For cool to cover me is the fog, cool and very kind,
Large as her love to hold and enfold me, quiet as death—or sleep—
It may be that where the fog lies I can smile again—or weep.

MUSIC

To my mother.

Oh, I have loved great rolling hills of sound,
A mountainous music, rising in slow curves
Of deep-toned and firm-moving melody
In a crescendo like a rounding peak
Near to the burning stars!

FOOD

The active body will be fed—
Give me this day my daily bread!

But, that my body may be strong,
Brave and ruddy and fit for song,

And that my spirit may bide in peace
Nor ask too soon for her release,

I'd have my food be fair and sound,
The good, glad fruit of the healthy ground.

Best I like figs in a deep, blue bowl,
Piled high, with cream to cover the whole,

Thick yellow cream on ripe figs chilled—
The pitcher empty when the bowl is filled.

Then, if any virtue be in food,
Surely such blessedness will make life good!

COLORS

Violet and amber, these are my colors;
  Amethyst and topaz, these are my desire!
I would wear gowns like darling dusky shadows—
  Gowns that are glowing like candle-light or fire—
I would look long on tumbled storm-clouds of summer—
  A sharp-darting lightning my spirit would be.
Violet and amber, these are my colors;
  Amethyst and topaz are dearest to me!

TREES

The apple tree is a dear tree
  And easy to climb;
The elm gives a pleasant shade
  In the summer time;
The maple will keep you dry
  Until the shower's end;
The willow is gentle
  And the oak a stout friend.
But though I live long and long,—
  Amen, so let it be!
I shall dream of eucalyptus
  Growing over me,
Tall and bare and beautiful
  Against a clear sky,
Blue-gum and red-gum
  Reaching very high,
Dark-crested in the sun
  And glad to throw away
Wasting withered bark of self,
  Day after day;
Daring to rise supreme,
  Line on lovely line—
Other trees for others,

But this tree is mine,
Though I live long and long
Even till I die.

Tall and bare and beautiful
Against a clear sky.

LOVE SONGS

AN INCANTATION

O strong sun of heaven, harm not my love!
Sear him not with your flame, blind him not
    with your beauty,
Shine for his pleasure.

O grey rains of heaven, harm not my love!
Drown not in your torrent the song of his
    heart;
Lave and caress him.

O swift winds of heaven, harm not my love!
Bruise not, nor buffet him with your rough
    humor;
Sing you his prowess.

O mighty triad, strong ones of heaven,
Sun, rain and wind, be gentle, I charge you;
For your mad mood of wrath, have me; I
    am ready;
But spare him, my lover, most proud and
    most dear—
O sun, rain and wind, strong ones of heaven!

A WALK IN SPRINGTIME

Curly were the ferns
  And cool was the brook,
When my love and I
  Went out to look;
But when we had seen
  We did not look again,
For love in our hearts
  Was beating like the rain.

Little pearly flowers,
  Pearly rose and blue,
Blossomed where we passed—
  We scarcely knew
That the air was sweet,
  That the earth was kind,
For love in our hearts
  Was blowing like the wind.

A CHANT OF YOUTH

To you, Beloved, I have lifted my face,
As a flower, amorous of summer sunshine,
To a revel of light, a warmth, a wonder—
I rest in the glow of your presence.

To you, Beloved, I cling with frail hands,
As a miser, clinging to heavy treasure;
For you are my wealth, my world's whole
treasure,
My passion of rubies and pearls.

To you, Beloved, my swift feet bear me,
As a child, entering a wild, sweet garden;
Your arms are all the garlands I have ever
chosen—
Your strength is my shapely tree.

For to you, Beloved, I have listened long,
And my ears remember a well-learned music,
Your voice surging sweet through dusk
into darkness,
My strong, flooding stream of spring.

And to you, Beloved, what shall I offer?
Naught but my life—the moments uncounted—
Thought, hope, and deed—a dream shared with no other—
And my soul's little flame thrice-lighted by your love!
Take then, the love that a woman would offer,
For to you, Beloved, I have lifted my face!

IN PASSING

I have been washed in joy
And dipped in glory;
I have been clad with life,
For me the world is new,
For my dear, in passing,
Has bent his face to greet me,
Warm as the sun,
Gay as the breeze,
Gentle as dew.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Through the low window of my life
I looked, and saw you passing by,
As lovely as the light!
To me you were the very dawn,
Or the dawn's echo of singing hues—
The flowers,
Or the dawn's answer from the earth—
Her ecstasy of green.

In the dark chamber of my life
I stood upright and looked;
My lips were muted by my need,
And I was silent, but I heard
That which was more than silence,
Calling,
"Let there be light for me
In the dark chamber of my life!"

Through the low window of my life
I leaned; I saw you pause and turn—
Through the low window of my life
You poured the shining sun!

MORNING AND EVENING

Sunlight and glory!

Who is singing of glory?

I am singing with heart as gay as the honeysuckle vine,
I am singing for one whose words are good as ruddy apples—
In the morning, in the evening, he is mine!

I am singing for one whose voice has music of moving waters;
Delicate ripple and terrible wave and thrilling current and tide
All have tones that he uses well in talk and song and laughter.
I am singing for love of a voice that was the joy of his bride.

Star-glow and glory!

Who is singing of glory?

I am singing for one whose spirit is light to
burn and shine,
A heaven of sun or a skyful of stars is he for
whom I am singing;
In the evening, in the morning, he is mine!

A SONG FOR MY MATE

Higher than the slim eucalyptus,
Higher than the dim, purple mountains,
Higher than the stern flight of eagles,
  Rose our young hopes, long, long ago.

Sweeter than wild, sweet berries,
Sweeter than a chill spring's bounty,
Sweeter than a meadowlark's carol,
  Were the young, sweet joys that we shared.

More bitter than a swelling olive,
More bitter than a brackish river,
More bitter than a crow's hard laughter,
  Were the sorrows we have known, my dear.

But nearer than the light is to the day,
And nearer than the night is to darkness,
And nearer than the winds to their crooning,
  I am drawn, I am held to your heart.

AT THE LAST

When all our songs are shut within numb lips,
And our joys are small stars denting the darkness,
When tears have been shed like dew upon our spirits
And our hopes have grown weary climbing unknown summits,
When our dreams have become red roads to achievement,
Or drab byways to failure,
And our mirth is remote as a mist of early morning
Vanished in the noonday
Across a level earth where sleep old comrades,
The good boon comrades of long ago,
Then, dear, let us go to the forest, to the forest
Where through the leaves, green mysteries recurrent,
Lightly quivers day, no longer full-tinted,
But toned to our mood . . .
We shall rest there at last

AT THE LAST

Where is a soft-moving, slow-moving murmur
Carrying memories of Spring's clear rapture.
We shall rest there at last as we have never
    rested.
On the floor of the forest is peace.

SONGS OF AN EMPTY HOUSE

VISTA

Before I die I may win grace
  To chant before the kings
Who reign in wonderlands of song
  Where every blossom sings;
I may put on a golden gown
  And glow with sunny light,
Carrying in my hair, the day,
  And in my eyes, the night.

It may be men will honor me,
  The wistful ones and wise,
Who know the ruth of victory,
  The joy of sacrifice;
I may be rich; I may be gay;
  But all the crowns grow old—
The laurel withers and the bay
  And dully rests the gold.

Before I die I may break bread
  With many queens and kings—
Oh, take the golden gown away,
  For there are dearer things!

And I shall miss the love of babes
  With flesh of rose and pearl,
The dewy eyes, the budded lips,
  A boy, a little girl.

FOOD AND CLOTHING

Yes, I live pleasantly and well,
  And dainty food I eat;
The manna in the wilderness
  Was not more sweet.
But I am starved for lack of pain,
  The ecstatic agony
That gives the world the wren, the deer,
  And you, and me.

White linen, very soft and clean,
  Enfolds me limb and breast;
And all my days are happy tasks,
  My nights are rest.
But I go cold for lack of pain,
  The ancient throes of birth
That clothe a woman with hard power
  And peace, and mirth.

CHILDLESS

If I had borne children
  I would have made bread,
I would have brought honey
  From the hive near my door;
I would have aired linen
  For table and bed
And gone every day
  For my goods, to the store.
I would have been rich
  With a dollar to spend,
And I would have been gay
  With the laugh of a friend,
And though I wore cotton,
  And worked all day,
I would have been proud
  When you looked my way!

Bread I must eat,
  Though its taste be stale;
Honey I can buy,
  Though I gather none.
High, where the fresh winds
  Never, never fail,

CHILDLESS

The linen hangs white
  In the pleasant sun.
And I go to market
  For needles and pins,
To chat with my neighbors
  And learn of my sins—
But the eyes of the mothers—
  What is it they say
That I never shall know,
  When they look my way?

FOR THE CHILD THAT NEVER WAS

O little hands that never were
  With apple-petalled beauty made,
You might have held me close to joy
  Whence I have strayed.

O little feet that never were
  Fashioned for tripping melody,
Your gladness might have kept me brave
  On Calvary.

O little lips that would have drawn
  White love to feed you, from my breast,
You would have been my love, itself,
  Made manifest.

O Child of mine—you never were—
  No throes have thrilled me to rejoice.
You would have been my conquering soul,
  My singing voice.

THE END

My father got me strong and straight and slim,
  And I give thanks to him;
My mother bore me glad and sound and sweet,
  I kiss her feet.

But now, with me, their generation fails
  And nevermore avails
To cast through me the ancient mould again,
  Such women and men.

I have no son, whose life of flesh and fire
  Sprang from my splendid sire,
No daughter for whose soul my mother's flesh
  Wrought raiment fresh.

Life's venerable rhythms like a flood
  Beat in my brain and blood,
Crying from all the generations past,
  "Is this the last?"

And I make answer to my haughty dead,
  Who made me, heart and head,
"Even the sunbeams falter, flicker and bend;
  I am the end."

SONGS OF LAUGHTER AND TEARS

A LONG SONG OF MOMUS, GOD OF LAUGHTER

When creeks and ditches overflow
  In days of early spring,
When shrieking bluejays tell their sins,
  And while the robins sing,
    When new calves nose me curiously,
    And tulips dress them gaudily,
    And boys play marbles merrily,
      And girls play jacks, I laugh!
    I clothe young Mirth in rich array.
    And crown her queen of every day,
      I am refreshed and innocent,
      And merrily I laugh!

When fat men slip on frosty walks
  And curse their clumsy feet;
When mincing ladies scream at mice,
  While little children eat;
    When debtors meet with creditors,
    When folly wins and wisdom bores,
    While grandsir reads and granddam snores—
      With wicked glee I laugh.

I hold my sides to keep me in
And stuff my mouth to hide my sin—
They care not, who keep faith with me,
How boisterously I laugh!

When youth is young in lustihead
And struts about too proud,
Or drinks too deep, or woos too late,
Or shouts his joy too loud;
When revels crowd the holy night
With ribaldry and rough delight,
When maids wear daggers tipped with spite,
Ah, me, I needs must laugh.
For though I keep an aching heart
And know the wounds that soon must smart,
Tears never quench the thirst of youth—
And wistfully I laugh.

When churches fill with hypocrites
And schools breed happy fools;
When lawyers would defy the law
And cavil at their rules;
When honest toil loves evil ease,

When platforms promise policies,
When those who should inspire, would
please—
At lunacy I laugh!
I shake the air for cowards all,
Who start to hear a petal fall;
I roar with ridicule—ah, ha!
And lustily I laugh.

Or, when a hero braves the world
For love of all mankind;
(For that great end he sees and dares,
Alas, they are too blind!)
By every great thought he has known,
By every shred of truth new-shown,
He will be more and more alone—
That he may hear, I laugh;
And those who fain would tear his flesh
But start me to a laughter fresh.
At them I laugh, for him I laugh,
And comradely I laugh.

With frilly flowers and babes at play
And honest lovers all;
When good wives fill their steaming pans
For homely festival;

When greybeards keep last holidays,
When sunlight strikes through winter haze
Into their sombre twilight ways,
With wondrous hope I laugh.
For all the best of life and death,
The birth cry and the passing breath,
With all the gods there are, I laugh,
And happily I laugh.

AN ELEGY

Comrade, they have closed your eyes
And given you a gift of tears;
They have spent their heavy sighs
Where none hears.
In your delicate fingers laying
Chilly flowers cloudy white,
Weeping, whispering, sighing, praying,
They will watch with you to-night;
And to-morrow they will take you
Silent to her riven breast,
Who was your triumphant mother,
Who is their unfailing mother,
To her broken bosom take you,
There to rest.

Kindly cool she will receive you,
Comrade; they will go and leave you;
They will weep again alone,
Wearing crape in solemn duty,
Who have never dreamed the beauty
You have known.
They will weep again together,
Stain glad memory with their tears,

Shut themselves away together
For a time, and with the years,
One by one they will forget you,
Dear, whose spirits never met you.

Comrade, they have called you young,
But your soul had travelled far
Into youth and into age,
Making greater pilgrimage
With the souls of sea and star,
With the songs the hills have sung,
Than they make who call you young.
They have said you went too soon,
Ere your glory was begun,
Sword unused and spurs not won,
You were morning without noon.
But you knew it was enough
Just to be fine human stuff
And to fill your little space
With delicate grace.

Therefore shall I feed my sorrow
With a steadfast, hollow gazing
On eyes shut against to-morrow,
On the terrible, amazing
Mystery of your folded fingers,

AN ELEGY

When my memory halts and lingers
With your spirit's afterglow
More than they could ever know?

I will make me fresh and fair,
Bind a flower in my hair,
Go abroad to meet the dawn
As you, too, have often gone,
Making splendid festival,
Comrade, where the petals fall
That were blossoms yesterday;
Where the buds put forth the green
That your prescience had foreseen,
I will sing my grief away
Into joy because you were.
With the flowers in my hair,
And the fresh sun on the dew,
I will sing this song for you,
Dawn-exalted on the earth
That gave you birth.

GARMENTS

Life has taken from us our garments of pleasure,
  Merry colors woven well we have laid aside;
But we have put on again the old robe of courage,
  Wearing what our fathers wore even till they died.

Lads wear it as the sky wears the flame of morning;
  Women wear it; like the dusk it folds their spirits in;
And strong men wear it as the grim, gusty winter
  Wears a coat of icy mail in winds screaming thin.

Life has taken away the quaint motley of the jester;
  Life has stolen pretty pearls and laces from the queen;

Life has torn the scholar's hood, the veils of the dreamer,
And many a little cloak of joy that kept our beauty clean.

But the old generations have given us their garment
Of the harsh cloth and heavy that man has often worn;
And we have put on again the old robe of courage,
And this shall not be taken; and this shall not be torn!

IN A CERTAIN RESTAURANT

These diners should have sat for old Franz
    Hals,
For all their faces are as round as moons,
Glowing with jovial warmth and creased with
    smiles
At the turbulent clatter of many forks and
    spoons.

There is no music and no cabaret—
China and linen both are coarse and plain—
But food there is, such stout and honest food
As tells a body he has not dined in vain.

Behind a bar three corpulent men in white
Are opening oysters, one by one by one,
Laying them delicately on beds of ice,
Friendly and slow, as if they think it fun.

Far back in the room there is a mighty grill
Ruddy with fire, clouded with fragrant steam,
Where ducks and chickens and other gentry
    turn
Over and over as in a drowsy dream.

And through the air come speeding plates
piled high
With giant potatoes, opened, foamy white,
Genial, impressive beefsteaks, lobsters pink
As coral beads, and pastry crisp and light.

This is the place of plenty I like best.
I watch Manhattan burghers and their wives
Eating tremendously, as all men should,
To please their palates and to save their lives.

No finicky fashion, no satiety,
No smirking gesture, and no sour debate
Trouble these diners. They are one with life,
Now for a while, though inarticulate.

Such excellent food demands much company
Oh, to go out with friendly haste and find
The hungriest hungry souls and dine them
here—
It would be good to entertain mankind!

GARDEN SONG

I went into my garden at break of Delight,
  Before Joy had risen in the eastern sky,
To see how many cucumbers had happened overnight,
  And how much higher stood the corn that yesterday was high.

I went into my garden when Rest had fallen away
  From the tops of blue hills, from the valleys gold and green
To see how far my beans had travelled up into the day,
  And whether all my lettuces were glad and cool and clean.

I went into my garden when Mirth was laughing low
  Through the sharp-scented leaves of the lush tomato vines,
Through the long, blue-grey leaves of the turnips in a row,
  Where early in the every-day the dew shakes and shines.

Oh, Rest had fallen away from the valleys
green and gold,
From the tops of blue hills that were quiet
all the night,
But the big round Joy was rising busy and
bold
When I went into my garden at break of
Delight.

875730

A SONG FOR MOTHERS' DAY

Mother, you gave me sun and stars,
Great hills, and rivers undefiled,
For, when you gave me life, you gave
Love of their beauty to your child.

Without you I could not have known
The Spring that makes the valleys green,
The rustling of the wings of birds,
Or clover fragrance kind and keen

Your travail gave me all my joys,
Laughter and talk and young delight
And dreams that float like clouds in heaven
High, high above me, shy and white.

For all these proud and lovely things
Thanks are too small a thing to give—
Mother, I thank you with my love,
Who gave me this good life to live.

BIRTH

This was the blessing of his draught of
power,
And this the sudden ripple of her hope,
And the swift current of their great desire,
The eddying wonder of their silent hours,
The rising flood-tide of her agony,
The billowing beauty of the infinite
Borne in, a miracle upon the shallows
Of their small, individual lives.

Yet is it but a little human babe,
Given at last into his reaching arms
And carried to the hollow of her breast!

TO MY COUNTRY

Beams from your forests built my little
home,
And stones from your deep quarries flagged
my hearth;
Your streams have rippled swiftly in my
blood,
Your fertile acres made my flesh for me,
And your clean-blowing winds have been
my breath;
The dreams you gave have been my dearest
dreaming,
And you have been the mother of my soul.

Therefore, my country, take again at need
Your excellent gifts, home, hearth, and flesh
and blood,
Young dreams and all the good I am or
have,
That all your later children may have peace
In little homes built of your wood and stone
And warmed and lighted by the love of man!

SONGS OF SUN AND SHADOW

I

I saw a golden horseman
  Ride upward out of dawn,
Upon a golden stallion
  On the trails of heaven gone;

And I, who travelled slowly
  Through drab and level days
Looked upward out of sorrow
  In ecstasies of praise.

I said, "Lo, one is golden
  And rides beyond my soul
And climbs the hills of heaven
  In fiery caracole!"

I said, "Lo, one has glory,
  The heavens' gallant guest!"
But he rides in dying splendor
  Through the far gates of the West!

II

My life is like a shadow, a shadow, a shadow,
With soft grey feet that patter down
A path of waning light;
And where the shadow passes is only rustling laughter
That rushes to the mighty dark
Of the low-lying night.

And all my days go dreaming, dreaming, dreaming
Of the declining summer time
And the descending sun,
Beseeching him to waken—O fallen sleeper, waken!
But he goes silently, who knows
The laughing day is done.

III

The shadows come and fold us in
  And hold us through the long night hours
As the quiet arms of wedded love
  In an old silence sweet as flowers.

These are they that guarded us
  Ere yet we knew the living womb,
And will come home for us again
  To the last candle-lighted room.

Oh, greatly soothe and silence me,
  Oh, welcome me to gentle rest,
Shadows, when I may leave my work
  And go to be your guest.

TIME-SHADOWS

Time-Shadows perish; there is no lovely shadow
But must fade out in dull, inglorious dust.
Deeds have no death. They were rooted in the Beginning;
Up toward the topmost skies of Time they thrust
Their branching beauty, living and everlasting,
Or their poor ugliness, because they must.

Dreams are undying. They are the rich sap moving
In the tree of life to prosper lovely deeds;
Upwelling out of the past they fill the branches
And are the food whereon all beauty feeds;
They are the zest of virtue in the blesséd,
The power in labors and the faith in creeds.

We are Time-Shadows, surely, and we perish;
These lips that drink, these lungs that love the air,

These hands that have the strength and skill to fashion
Soon will be light enough for wind to bear.
To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
For water and air and earth they will not care.

But these that we have known, the fluent dreaming
And the hard doing, will live when we must die;
Oh, may they flourish with immortal beauty
Out of our lives, growing as Time goes by,
Forever and forever and forever
Thrusting new blossoms toward the topmost sky!

WHIMS FOR POETS

THE WINDS

The wind blew north, the wind blew south,
The wind blew cherries into my mouth,
The wind blew a wild rose into my hair
And a pin of gold to hold it there.

The wind blew east, the wind blew west,
The wind blew a dagger against my breast,
And thorny boughs it blew in my way,
And I was wounded, day after day.

Now all the life of the world, I find,
Is a whim of the winds, be it cruel or kind.
Oh, meet them singing, as they rush forth,
Blowing east and west, or south and north!

TO SEANCHAN

(In "At the King's Threshold"
by William Butler Yeats)

We have been too humble, Seanchan,
Humble as you were proud;
We have left the royal table
For the platters of the crowd;
And we eat what they have broken,
And we drink what they will leave,
But we hear when they have spoken
And we suffer when they grieve.

DUTY

I should be working on a book
  To earn a thousand dollars,
Or win a dim, respectful look
  From musty, dusty scholars;

This duty has not troubled me
  All day; I have been singing
In open meadows merrily,
  Near new brambles springing,

Near field-sparrows nesting
  Where blackberry blossoms nod,
And now—I am resting
  On the soft, green sod.

IF THEY WILL NOT HEAR ME

If they will not hear me, shall I sing another song,
  Louder yet, or longer, or livelier, to-day?
Shall I steal a passion that my music may be strong?
  Shall I steal a frolic that my music may be gay?

Thrushes sing their own song over again and over;
  Larks sing their own song wherever they may fly;
Robins sing their own song, hopping in the clover
  Of my cool, wet lawn. Are they braver than I?

SONGS I SANG LONG AGO

Songs I sang long ago
I would forget; I do not know
Why I sang shrilly, frailly,
Crudely, harshly, poorly, palely.
But the little song I sang last night
Is the song of my delight,
Dearest of all the songs of men,
And will be—till I sing again!

CALIFORNIA POEMS

THE MOUNTAIN LILAC OF CALIFORNIA

Near San Diego

Upon the hills,
Upon the little foothills,
Out there, beyond the pungent sage of the
    mesa,
A film of blue has shadowed the soft green
That followed the rains of spring.
And into the mountains
Far beyond the foothills,
A film of fine elusive blue is rising,
Even as smoke might rise from spreading fires
Long smouldering near the earth.

The golden sun pitched camp upon the hills,
After the long, grey rains had washed them
    clean;
And where he touched it, and where his
    fingers wandered,
The earth, grown hot with pride in his
    bright beauty,
Gave back this smoke,

Soon to be broken by the flaring flame
Of mimulus and tarweed.
Soon through this living haze,
This dear blue smoke,
Will the sun-kindled summer break and
burn
Upon the hills.

A NIGHT ON THE BEACH

North Island

Where beach-verbenas lay their little cold
leaves
Upon dry sand, and lift their sticky-sweet
blossoms
Pale purple in the dawn, and where the
primrose,
With healthy golden passion fights the tides
For space in which to flaunt her echoed sun-
light,
There after hours upon the tossing water,
Utterly weary, we lay down to rest.
And there came near to us the blessed
Night
Who covered us with peace. And there we
met
The Morning, with all gladness in her eyes,

THESE FOR ME

Tuberoses for fragrance,
Orchids for mystery—
Have them, if you care for them,
But once again, before I die,
These for me—
The sharp scent of wild sage,
Blossoming, fretted by bees,
When Spring rolls clouds away
From a southern mesa,
And the rare sight of yucca
Blooming stark and white in blue twilight
On the banks of the Sacramento—
For fragrance, for mystery,
These for me.

THE FOG COMES IN AT NIGHT

San Diego Harbor

A little while ago the sky was clear,
A wild blue wine for our young eyes to drink,
A wine in which the stars, like jolly bubbles,
Rose sparkling from the depths. And while we looked,
A milky cloud flooded the splendid cup
And hid the bubble stars, and made opaque
That which our eyes were drinking, but our spirits
Drank yet more deep of a wonder yet more dear!

TO THE SUMMER SUN

Coronado

Great sun, why are you pitiless?
All day your glance is hard and keen
Upon the hills that once were green,
Where Summer, sere and comfortless,
Now lies brown-frocked against the sky
And makes of them her resting place,
Since she has drunk the valleys dry.
You never turn away your face,
And I, who love you, can not bear
Your long, barbaric, searching look
Down through the low cool flights of air—
Your tirelessness I can not brook;
For all my body aches with light,
And you have glutted me with sight,
With flooding color made me blind
To homely things more soft and kind,
Till I have longed for clouds to roll
Between you and my troubled soul—
Oh, great Beloved, hide away
That I may miss you, for a day!

THE PAGEANT

THE PAGEANT

Forever is a long road; Forever is a highway
Whereon go marching through arching nights
and days
Proud Dreams with golden crowns fair upon
their foreheads,
Shining Dreams with haloes and bright
Dreams with bays,
And all along the flowered edge the little
Dreams go dancing,
Singing gay canticles of praise.

Forever is a broad road where have met to-
gether
Brave Deeds in red robes and Deeds of
golden fire,
Grave Deeds in silver gowns, quaint Deeds in
motley,
Quiet Deeds in homely grey that only saints
admire,
Gentle Deeds that love the green raiment of
the summer,
Pure Deeds in very white without the chill of
snow,

Squalid Deeds in dull rags, pitiful and ugly,
Down the broad highway they go.

All the Dreams are living still, all the Deeds
    are working,—
White man and yellow man and black man at
    last
Will join hands and teach their feet how to
    walk together,
Following slowly where their Dreams would
    have them follow fast,
Where the Dreams with golden crowns, the
    shining Dreams with haloes,
And the Dreams with bays have passed.

All the Dreams will succor them, giving
    power and beauty,
Fostering Deeds in red and grey, Deeds in
    gold and black,
Helping Deeds in silver gowns to triumph in
    their going
Down the everlasting road where is no turn-
    ing back.
Speaking out of silences, shining out of
    shadows,

Telling what men never tell, showing what
they are,
Though they taste a bitter death, making
them immortal,
Dreams have gone out to travel far.

Forever is a long road; Forever is a highway
Whereon go marching through arching day
and night,
Old Dreams from long ago, carrying their
lanterns,
Young Dreams from yesterday, bearing rosy
light,
And little Dreams not yet come true, pulling
wayside blossoms
To twinkle in their hands, starry white.

Printed in the United States of America

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

DEC 2 1970

Form 410